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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 10 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Miculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/66/23 (chaps. VII and XII) and A/66/65 and Add.1)

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Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other items*) (*continued*) (A/66/23 (chaps. VIII-XII) and A/66/260)

1. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said that the declaration of successive decades for the eradication of colonialism had provided an opportunity to take stock of progress and determine the best way forward. The United Nations and, in particular, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, could claim numerous achievements. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, contained in General Assembly resolution 55/2, Member States had rededicated themselves to support all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States and the right to self-determination of peoples which remained under colonial domination and foreign occupation. The declaration in 2010 of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism should not take away from the successes of its predecessors. He hoped that during the coming decade the United Nations and its Member States would take swift action to eradicate colonialism completely, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

2. **Mr. Gaspar** (Timor-Leste), recalling the role played by the Committee in his country's independence, said that Timor-Leste supported the legitimate right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. A lasting solution to the conflict, respecting the Charter of the United Nations, international law and human rights, should be reached through direct negotiations between the Frente Polisario and Morocco under the auspices of the United Nations, in consonance with the position taken by the African Union, United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. In 2010, Timor-Leste had accorded full diplomatic status to the embassy of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Dili. He welcomed the progress made, including the negotiations between the parties and the confidence-building measures taken. However, continuance of the status quo was unacceptable and threatened regional stability. Over the course of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, his delegation hoped that the international community would resolve the issue of the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa.

3. **Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan) said that, despite the General Assembly's repeated affirmation that it was incompatible with the Charter, colonialism had not ended with the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, owing to a lack of political will. Administering Powers must show that political will and allow the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination. The United Nations should assist the Territories and raise their inhabitants' awareness of their options.

4. Guaranteed by the Charter and recognized under the human rights conventions, the right to self-determination was the fundamental principle driving all struggles against colonial domination and foreign occupation; its negation ignited conflicts and threatened peace and security.

5. In South Asia, the inalienable right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir was recognized in several Security Council resolutions. In the interest of lasting peace and stability in South Asia, Pakistan was committed to a peaceful settlement of the dispute affecting that region. The United Nations decolonization agenda would be incomplete without resolution of the dispute.

6. The underlying cause of the Middle East conflict was the continued denial of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Pakistan supported their just struggle for peace and freedom and their quest for full membership of the United Nations. A strong and viable Palestinian State could guarantee peace in the Middle East.

7. Turning to the question of Western Sahara, he expressed the hope that the parties to the dispute would, in a spirit of accommodation and goodwill, achieve a just and mutually acceptable settlement to bring peace and progress to the region.

8. **Mr. Dos Santos** (Paraguay) said that his country's position on the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic with respect to the long-standing sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas was unwavering. The Declaration on the Malvinas Islands issued by the Heads of State of the States members and associated States of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) at Potrero de los Funes in 1996, and the 1999 Asunción Declaration, called upon the parties to resolve the dispute peacefully, ending the colonial situation in the Islands. The lack of genuine progress in the bilateral dialogue between Argentina and the United Kingdom was regrettable.

9. Firm political will was required in order to reach a satisfactory settlement to the issue, taking into account Argentina's historical claims. His delegation opposed prospecting for hydrocarbons on the Argentine continental shelf by the United Kingdom, a flagrant violation of General Assembly resolution 31/49, and expressed the hope that the Argentine and United Kingdom Governments would continue to strengthen their political, economic and cultural relations with a view to resolving their dispute.

10. **Ms. Cavanagh** (New Zealand), welcoming the draft resolution on the question of Tokelau (A/66/23 (chap. XII)), recalled that the people of Tokelau had signalled in two referendums on self determination that conditions were not yet right for constitutional change. New Zealand's and Tokelau's leaders had agreed to postpone further acts of self-determination. Reporting to the Committee in June 2011, the Administrator of Tokelau had noted that since 2008 the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau had focused on the core requirements of the population of the atolls.

11. Tokelau had declared a national emergency owing to a severe water shortage and, together with New Zealand and other partners, including the United States of America, had been trying to resolve the crisis. For many years the Territory had faced challenges posed by its remoteness, its tiny population and the lack of resources. A national strategic plan to satisfy the people's cultural, economic and social aspirations had formed the basis of New Zealand's partnership with the Territory over the previous six months. A joint commitment for development had recently been signed, outlining New Zealand's financial assistance for a four-year period. Since 2010, progress had been made in improving infrastructure, but more needed to be done in health and education.

12. Tokelau was an observer at the Pacific Islands Forum and had recently been admitted as an associate member by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Tokelau's needs were primarily met by New Zealand, but the international community provided assistance through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in particular, and by contributing to the Tokelau International Trust Fund. Committed to enabling the people of Tokelau to exercise their right to self-determination, once the Territory's infrastructure and human resources could meet its needs, New Zealand would continue to report to the Special Committee on any developments.

13. **Ms. Bibalou** (Gabon) said that, at the beginning of Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, Gabon was preoccupied by the fate of the remaining Non Self-Governing Territories. Her delegation urged the administering Powers to hasten decolonization. In the case of Western Sahara, Gabon welcomed the resumption of talks between the parties to the dispute under the mediation of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General. Although the parties remained far apart, the Moroccan autonomy initiative provided a serious and credible basis for moving forward, as recognized in Security Council resolution 1979 (2011). Gabon agreed with the Secretary-General that the parties should negotiate in good faith and without preconditions in order to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

14. Welcoming the informal meeting to be held in October 2011 under the auspices of the Personal Envoy, she said that the international community should do more to settle the dispute, which threatened

to destabilize the region and encourage criminal activities. The efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy must be encouraged and the Committee must maintain its consensus-based approach in an effort to break the current deadlock and move towards a political solution.

15. **Ms. Lalama** (Ecuador) expressed her country's full support for the principle of self-determination, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Having chaired the Special Committee since February 2011, Ecuador wished to see a quick end to the decolonization process and urged the administering Powers to intensify their dialogue with the Special Committee and the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

16. Ecuador was concerned that, 50 years after the General Assembly had established the need for bilateral negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom to find a peaceful solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands, nothing had been done to end a colonial occupation that had lasted 178 years. The sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas illegally occupied by the United Kingdom must be resolved in the interests of the Islands' population. Ecuador denounced the illegal military activities and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources being conducted on the Argentine continental shelf by the United Kingdom. The activities violated General Assembly resolution 31/49 and were an affront to the whole region.

17. Her delegation reiterated its full support for the Sahrawi people and their right to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). In recent years there had been various rounds of negotiations and the parties had reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing talks. Ecuador commended the work of the Personal Envoy and urged the parties to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in order to resume family visits by air and initiate family visits by road.

18. After more than a century of colonization by the United States of America, the people of Puerto Rico continued to struggle to exercise their legitimate right to independence and self-determination. In view of the 30 resolutions affirming that inalienable right, Ecuador called for every aspect of the issue of Puerto Rico to be considered by the General Assembly.

19. **Mr. Touré** (Guinea) encouraged the Special Committee to intensify its dialogue with the administering Powers and to continue holding regional seminars, such as the one to be held in the Pacific region in 2012. Having made huge sacrifices in the past to liberate colonial peoples in Africa, Guinea would do all it could to eradicate global colonialism once and for all.

20. Welcoming the renewed interest taken by the United Nations in the question of Western Sahara, he commended the Secretary-General on his recent report (A/66/260) and his close cooperation with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission with a view to reaching a peaceful and lasting settlement. Appreciative of the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to involve the international community, Guinea was encouraged by the fact that several rounds of informal talks had been held and by the parties' commitment to implement and strengthen confidence-building measures.

21. His delegation saw no alternative to the quest for a negotiated, just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, guaranteeing regional peace and stability, in which connection it supported the Moroccan initiative on autonomy. He welcomed the political will shown by the parties to move forward in order to break the current impasse. The parties should continue to cooperate with the United Nations in implementing the relevant resolutions. The Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy should pursue their efforts to achieve a peaceful solution.

22. **Mr. Komba** (Central African Republic) said that the international community must help bring about a negotiated settlement to the Western Sahara conflict. Such crises exacerbated the difficulties already facing broadly homogeneous communities and undid the efforts of developing countries. The blindly destructive violence led to loss of life, with women and children paying a high price. The Central African Republic therefore welcomed the negotiations on the Moroccan initiative and the efforts by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a political solution to the question of Western Sahara. Recalling the Security Council's repeated acknowledgement of Morocco's commendable efforts to negotiate an autonomous status for the Sahara region, he urged the parties to begin

substantive negotiations in order to end the impasse. His delegation supported calls for a census of the residents of the Tindouf camps and the implementation of a programme of individual interviews.

23. **Mr. Archondo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that all the administering Powers should negotiate just and lasting solutions to bring colonialism quickly to an end. Recognizing that the people of Western Sahara had the right to self-determination under the Charter, his delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General, through his Personal Envoy, to find a just, lasting and peaceful solution that would guarantee the future development of Western Sahara and the surrounding areas.

24. Puerto Rico was a Latin American and Caribbean nation colonized by an occupying Power and should be allowed to decide its own future as an independent country with its own identity, culture and language. He called on the United States Government to open a frank and transparent dialogue that would allow the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with international law.

25. His delegation supported Argentina's legitimate rights in the dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas; there was no doubt that the Malvinas Islands were and would continue to be part of Argentina's national territory. The illegal seizure of the Islands in 1833 could not be justified by any occupation by force, act of war or armed intervention; nor could the passing of 178 years erase Argentina's legitimate rights to sovereignty and territorial integrity. Negotiations were the best means of settling the dispute and any unilateral decision by the United Kingdom Government would violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

26. **Ms. Malenga** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) reaffirmed her country's support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the international community to help the parties to the Western Sahara conflict to reach a just political solution. As called for by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, the parties should take a new approach in their negotiations. The Moroccan initiative on autonomy, noted in Security Council resolution 1979 (2011), had launched a momentum that could bring about a just, lasting and mutually acceptable settlement. She hailed Morocco's commitment not only to the negotiations but also to discussions on governance issues, including education, environment, health, natural resources and demining. The international community should seize the historic opportunity offered by the initiative to end the extremely difficult humanitarian situation facing the residents of the Tindouf camps.

27. **Mr. Vidal** (Uruguay) said that, at the start of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the international community should redouble its efforts to achieve self-determination in the Non-Self-Governing Territories by promoting dialogue and cooperation between the administering Powers and their Territories. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, Uruguay defended the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination. Talks between Morocco and the Frente Polisario must be resumed as soon as possible with a view to reaching a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict. Uruguay fully supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and urged the parties to respect human rights.

28. Uruguay had consistently supported Argentina's legitimate sovereignty claim over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, not only because Argentina was its neighbour but also because of the claim's geographical, historical and legal basis. Since the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX), the General Assembly and the Special Committee had consistently held that the question of the Malvinas Islands was a special and particular colonial situation involving a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, the Argentine and United Kingdom Governments should resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and declarations of the United Nations and the Organization of American States and the provisions of the Charter, including the principle of territorial integrity. Uruguay recognized the constructive attitude of the Argentine Government and called on the Secretary-General to continue his mission of good offices as requested in General Assembly resolutions.

29. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said that cooperation between the peoples of the Territories and

the administering Powers must continue, while the international community must continue to support the Territories' social and economic development.

30. He urged the international community to find a just, mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara. The efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to revive the political talks and build on the progress made to date were commendable. It was gratifying that despite the difficulties that had arisen during the informal talks the parties were determined to seek an acceptable solution to the question of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. The unacceptable status quo benefited no party to the conflict, while the impasse threatened subregional and international peace and stability. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the relevant Security Council resolutions and the efforts of the Secretary-General. The Moroccan initiative for negotiating an autonomy statute for the Sahara region was an appropriate means of settling the dispute. With the international community's support, the parties must begin negotiating substantive issues, make the necessary compromises to overcome their differences and abstain from any act that might jeopardize the success of the negotiations.

31. **Mr. Ndabishuriye** (Burundi) said that his delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a just, mutually acceptable and lasting solution to the issue of self-determination in Western Sahara. He welcomed Security Council resolution 1979 (2011), the information provided by the Secretary-General on the situation of refugees in the Tindouf camps and the Security Council's assessment of the Moroccan proposal for autonomy as a serious and credible initiative. Burundi congratulated the parties on the progress made and urged them to accelerate the negotiating process, in a realistic spirit of compromise, as it was the only means of achieving peace and stability in the region.

32. **Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) said that his country had always supported the decolonization process and continued to argue for enjoyment by the remaining colonial Territories of self-determination, democracy and human rights, in accordance with the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands had been an integral part of Argentine territory since the independence of that country. Since 1833, however, they had been the subject of a colonial dispute; the justice of Argentina's claim had been recognized by the General Assembly in various resolutions and supported by Latin American countries, including Costa Rica. Regional Heads of State and Government had called on the Argentine and United Kingdom Governments to resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and declarations of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and the purposes and principles of the Charter, including the principle of territorial integrity.

33. With regard to the prospecting for non-renewable natural resources being conducted in the disputed area by the United Kingdom, his delegation called on the United Kingdom Government, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49, to refrain from any unilateral moves that would prevent the territorial dispute from being resolved. The United Nations should help settle international disputes by supporting the values of democracy, human rights and justice. Costa Rica believed in the self-determination of peoples and the direct link between sovereignty and democracy.

34. His Government continued to argue for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara, in accordance with international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which called for a referendum on self-determination. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) should be mandated to monitor human rights in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps. His delegation hoped that the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would secure a just solution to the conflict without delay.

35. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that, having experienced foreign domination, his country was concerned that global decolonization, yet to be completed, was allotted insufficient time on the United Nations agenda. His Government recognized the right of the Sahrawi people to peace, respect, self-determination and independence, and called upon the parties to the conflict to accelerate their negotiations with a view to holding a free and fair referendum in Western Sahara, as provided for by United Nations resolutions. Namibia supported the peoples of Western Sahara and Palestine in their just cause and hoped they would soon attain freedom.

36. **Mr. Mashabane** (South Africa) said that the United Nations remained paralysed on the question of Western Sahara, to whose people it had an obligation. He denounced the repeated violations of the Charter and United Nations resolutions by Member States and the failure of the United Nations even to provide basic information about the situation in the Territory, for which no administering Power had been named. Although the International Court of Justice and the United Nations had issued opinions in support of the Sahrawi people's right to self determination, the referendum mandated by the Security Council had not been held. The Sahrawi people must be allowed and helped to choose their own future, as was their legal right, and not have autonomy forced upon them. South Africa called for greater efforts to hold a referendum, in accordance with the position of the African Union, of which the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic was a credible member.

37. The lack of a settlement was holding up Africa's socio economic development and integration based on peace, security and a shared identity. In flagrant violation of international law, some Member States had been exploiting the natural resources of the Western Sahara through bilateral trade agreements. Moreover, the Security Council had ignored the worsening human rights situation and failed to protect civilians in Western Sahara, who had repeatedly suffered, most recently in events at Dakhla and the encampment at Gdim Izik. He recalled that capacity building was a crucial element of decolonization. In the absence of any progress reports on the social, economic and cultural development of Western Sahara, the United Nations must visit the Territory and provide updates on the situation on the ground.

38. **Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) said that a peaceful and balanced solution could and must be found to conflicts such as that in Western Sahara. He welcomed the ongoing negotiations, which the Security Council had described as serious and credible. It was encouraging that the Moroccan initiative on autonomy had resulted from wide-ranging national and international consultations. All parties must act in a spirit of realism, to allow the negotiations to move towards the achievement of a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable agreement. The countries involved in the conflict must show flexibility and build mutual trust. His delegation urged the parties to take advantage of the historic opportunity and settle the conflict once and for all in accordance with the relevant resolutions.

39. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that his Government was seeking a negotiated solution to the question of Western Sahara in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council. The solidarity displayed by the peoples of the Maghreb constituted an eloquent appeal for the countries of the region to overcome their differences and jointly address the challenges facing them. He hoped that the democratic stirrings in the region would facilitate early resolution of the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara and induce the other parties to adopt a constructive attitude.

40. Having painstakingly implemented a settlement plan until it was judged inapplicable by the United Nations, Morocco had begun to explore a political solution that the other parties had done everything to thwart. In response to Security Council calls for compromise, Morocco had held national, regional and international consultations resulting in an autonomy initiative that accorded with international standards, met the population's expectations and complied with the Security Council's terms of reference. That initiative had been welcomed by the Security Council and had triggered a negotiation process in which Morocco, the Saharan population and the whole of the Maghreb placed high hopes. The Security Council had invited the parties and neighbouring States to join the negotiations in a spirit of realism and compromise, respecting the wishes of the population concerned. Morocco was ready to abide by those parameters, with the Personal Envoy's support, and negotiate a lasting political settlement. It had shown its commitment to that goal in the eight rounds of informal meetings held since August 2009. However, Morocco now wanted formal negotiations to resume and hoped that the other parties would heed the call by the Security Council and join them in the quest for a win-win solution.

41. The Security Council had called on the neighbouring countries to cooperate in order to end the current impasse. Morocco therefore welcomed Algeria's contribution to the success of the meeting in February 2011 that had allowed for the resumption of family visits and hoped it would also agree to the holding of a population census in the Tindouf camps, as requested by UNHCR and in accordance with its international obligations. Knowledge of the exact number of camp residents would allow for more transparent management of the humanitarian aid

destined for them. He reminded the Committee that what was at stake was the fate of thousands of people who since 1975 had been denied their fundamental human rights. The peoples of the Maghreb would judge the parties to the conflict by their ability to transcend their differences and end an artificial dispute.

42. Morocco's autonomy proposal was proof of its commitment to compromise and he hoped that the other parties would accept it. The residents of the Tindouf camps had been closely following Morocco's efforts to develop infrastructure and public services in the Sahara and were impatient to join their compatriots in implementing the reforms launched by the King to improve local governance, encourage the development of regional specificities and strengthen democracy.

43. The changes taking place in the Maghreb offered an opportunity to improve intraregional relations. Recent visits by Algerian and Moroccan ministers raised hopes that bilateral relations could be normalized and that the Algerian-Moroccan border might be re-opened. Reviving the Arab Maghreb Union project and improving relations between Morocco and Algeria would undoubtedly help to resolve the dispute over the Moroccan Sahara while making the five countries in the region more able to face their common security challenges. Morocco called on its fellow Maghreb countries to turn the project into reality.

44. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) said that, as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism began, Western Sahara was the last Territory in Africa still awaiting decolonization, despite United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Working within the African Union and the United Nations, Algeria and other African States had consistently striven for the full restoration of all the legitimate rights of the people of Western Sahara and appealed for greater efforts towards the holding of a referendum to enable them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. Algeria stood by the people of Western Sahara, recalling that the United Nations was responsible for solving the question, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

45. Security Council resolution 1754 (2007), and subsequent resolutions, including resolution 1979 (2011), had called for direct negotiations on an equal footing between Morocco and the Frente Polisario. The different interpretations of the purpose of the negotiations were unfounded since the Security Council had clearly called for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would allow self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. Algeria's glorious fight for independence had historically made it a leader of liberation movements. Out of solidarity and justice, it was bound to support the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and had therefore participated in the formal and informal talks as an observer and as a neighbouring State.

46. His Government would continue to contribute towards reconciliation between the Sahrawi and Moroccan peoples. Welcoming the positive momentum achieved in the negotiations by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy and the informal talks held since August 2009 in readiness for a new round of formal negotiations, Algeria deplored the repeated stalling of talks over differences that were by no means insurmountable. Continuing to support the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, his country would do all it could to bring about a peaceful settlement.

47. In an era of globalization, there was a trend towards the creation of regional groupings. United by the same history and destiny, the peoples of the Maghreb were likelier than others to form such a bloc. They were aware that the construction of a peaceful and prosperous Europe had been made by possible by allowing populations to exercise their right to self-determination. Algeria was determined to act in concert with its neighbours to relaunch the process of building a Maghreb united in peace, stability and prosperity. Settling the Western Sahara conflict on the basis of self-determination would pave the way.

48. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolutions and the draft decision before the Committee under agenda items 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60, none of which had any programme budget implications.

Draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.3: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories

49. *Draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.3 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.5: Question of Western Sahara

50. **Mr. Kos** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries

Croatia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and, in addition, Georgia, Norway and the Republic of Moldova, said that the European Union supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provided for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Urging the parties and neighbouring States to cooperate with the Personal Envoy, it welcomed Security Council resolution 1979 (2011) and the parties' commitment to intensify the negotiations, which should be held in good faith and without preconditions, in accordance with recent Security Council resolutions.

51. The European Union supported the holding of further informal meetings and welcomed discussions on the ideas contained in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2011/249). The parties should cooperate with UNHCR in implementing and possibly extending confidence-building measures. The European Union welcomed the UNHCR seminar held in Madeira, Portugal, in September 2011. It remained concerned about the implications of the Western Sahara conflict for security and cooperation in the region.

52. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) welcomed the progress made on the question of Western Sahara and the clarity and objectivity of the Secretary-General's report (A/66/260), and in particular its highlighting of the importance of continued United Nations engagement to break the deadlock in the negotiations. The parties should make full use of the historic opportunity thus presented.

53. His delegation was concerned by the violations of military agreement No. 1, and urged the parties to establish direct communication channels in the context of military verification mechanisms concerning alleged violations and other matters of common interest. In consultation with UNHCR, the parties should also facilitate expansion of the family visits programme. Progress in that area would improve the atmosphere ahead of the upcoming informal talks.

54. His delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to facilitate progress in those talks on the key aspects of the conflict. The overriding interest of the Sahrawi people should motivate all parties to be realistic and reach a negotiated settlement in good faith under the auspices of the international community. For its part, the international community must explore solutions and so address the emerging threats that jeopardized the stability of the region.

55. The Moroccan autonomy proposal, aimed at securing a consensus-based solution, deserved serious consideration. The proposal had been put forward in the context of efforts to build a modern, democratic society based on the rule of law, freedom and socio-economic development, promising reconciliation and a better future for all. The Sahrawi people would be guaranteed full participation within Morocco, with their own legislative, executive and legal institutions. The Moroccan State would retain its competence in matters relating to defence and external relations and in respect of constitutional and religious questions.

56. He recalled that the General Assembly and Security Council had endorsed the Moroccan autonomy proposal, which gave full expression to the right to self-determination. He hailed the willingness of the parties to resume negotiations and Algeria's willingness to work with them on any agreement on confidence-building measures and human rights matters. The parties should make full use of the informal talks to overcome their differences and put an end to the suffering of the Sahrawi people. The risk of prolonged destabilization in the region could be addressed only if the question of Western Sahara was resolved quickly.

57. *Draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.5 was adopted.*

Draft decision A/C.4/66/L.4: Question of Gibraltar

58. *Draft decision A/C.4/66/L.4 was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV: Question of New Caledonia (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

59. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

Draft resolution V: Question of Tokelau (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

60. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

Draft resolution VI: Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

61. **The Chair** recalled that the draft resolution had been orally revised by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee at the Committee's 2nd meeting.

62. *Draft resolution VI, as orally revised, was adopted.*

63. **Ms. Pedrós-Carretero** (Spain) said that, whereas Spain supported the principle of self-determination with regard to draft resolution VI, in certain cases the principle of territorial integrity applied to the decolonization process, as was the case of Gibraltar. In accordance with the General Assembly's mandate, Spain wanted the dispute over Gibraltar to be settled once and for all through negotiations with the United Kingdom, in which the interests and aspirations of Gibraltar would be heard.

64. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) expressed his country's support for the right to self-determination of the peoples in all 11 Territories considered in draft resolution VI, in accordance with the principles of the Charter, the Declaration on decolonization and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Accordingly, he reiterated the need for the administering Powers, the governments of those Territories and the United Nations to ensure that the populations of those Territories were made aware of their right to self-determination through civic education. However, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), self-determination was not the only principle applying to decolonization; the principle of territorial integrity also applied in certain cases, such as that of the Malvinas Islands. All resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands had explicitly defined it as a special and particular colonial situation. In that context, Argentina reiterated its willingness to resume negotiations with the United Kingdom to settle the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

65. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that since her country supported the right to self-determination it had joined the consensus on draft resolution VI. However, it found the draft resolution partly unacceptable in that it failed to reflect the modernization of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories. It was a mutually acceptable relationship, based on partnership, shared values and recognition of the right to self-determination. In particular, the draft resolution did not reflect the progress made in the Turks and Caicos Islands where, following wide consultations, a new Constitution had been agreed upon. It would enter into force and elections would be held in the Territory in 2012, provided certain conditions were met. The draft resolution made no reference to the new Constitution that had entered into force in Montserrat in September 2011, an event that her delegation welcomed. She reiterated the United Kingdom's position that the peoples of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar had the right to self-determination.

66. **Mr. Raguttahalli** (India), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the comments made by the representative of Pakistan with reference to Jammu and Kashmir were unwarranted and irrelevant. The State of Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, whose Constitution protected the fundamental rights of all its citizens. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had expressed their will in free and fair elections.

67. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, refuted the claim by the representative of India that his own comments about Jammu and Kashmir were irrelevant. For 63 years, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which was not and never had been an integral part of India, had been denied the right to self-determination. In accordance with several United Nations resolutions, binding on both India and Pakistan but yet to be implemented, Jammu and Kashmir was a disputed territory whose final disposition was to be made in accordance with the will of its people. No electoral exercise conducted by India could replace an expression of the people's will through a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

68. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statements by the representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. Her Government attached great importance to the principle of self-determination as set out in the Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. There could be no

negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as their inhabitants so wished.

69. The United Kingdom's relationship with all its Overseas Territories was a modern one, based on partnership, shared values and recognition of the right to self-determination. Democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands had again reminded the Special Committee of the historical facts that the Falkland Islands had no indigenous people and that no civilian population had been removed before their people had settled the Falkland Islands in 1833. Expressing their wish, in accordance with their right to self-determination, that the status of the Falkland Islands should remain unchanged, they had deplored the illegal measures taken by the Argentine Government to restrict their transport links and access to free trade. The government of the Falkland Islands was entitled to develop fishing and hydrocarbons industries within its territorial waters in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The United Kingdom would continue to defend the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their social and economic future.

70. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom, reiterated his Government's position that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentine territory and that they were the subject of a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom, as had been recognized repeatedly by the international community. The illegal occupation by the United Kingdom had led to the adoption of successive General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions, all of which urged the two Governments to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful, lasting solution to the dispute. That position had also been repeatedly endorsed by the Organization of American States.

71. Argentina deplored the attempts by the United Kingdom to distort the historical facts of its illegal occupation since 1833, the subject of repeated protests by Argentina ever since. That distortion revealed the United Kingdom's uncertainty as to its alleged sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) had established that the only way to settle the dispute was through the resumption of bilateral negotiations in order to find without delay a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute, and the two countries had made an unequivocal commitment to reaching an amicable settlement. By complying with that resolution, the United Kingdom would be demonstrating the lawful and responsible behaviour that it demanded of the rest of the international community.

72. Instead the United Kingdom justified its occupation solely on the basis of the right to self-determination, which it invoked exclusively in relation to the Malvinas Islands, even though that principle did not apply to the dispute. His delegation deplored the attempts by the United Kingdom to raise the hopes of the population of the Malvinas Islands with regard to the illegal exploitation of Argentina's natural resources. The rights of the people of the Malvinas Islands were adequately protected by international law and the Argentine Constitution. Finally, he reaffirmed Argentina's legitimate right to national sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

The meeting was suspended at 12.55 p.m. and resumed at 1 p.m.

73. **The Chair** said that owing to technical difficulties with the voting machine the Committee would defer taking action on the outstanding draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Miculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)

Draft resolution I on information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

1. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

2. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

3. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 131 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.**

4. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. Her Government did not take issue with the main objective of the draft resolution, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its obligations fully in that regard in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. It believed, however, that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter ultimately fell to the government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

Agenda item 57: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Draft resolution II on economic and other activities (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

5. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

6. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada,

* The delegations of Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Fiji, Lesotho, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago subsequently informed the Committee that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 144 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.**

8. **Mr. Diaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of draft resolution II on the understanding that the references in the text to the right to self-determination — which, according to resolution 1514 (XV), presupposed the existence of a people subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation — were not relevant to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, because they had been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, which had expelled the local population of the Islands and replaced it with its own population. The General Assembly itself had expressly ruled out the applicability of the principle of self-determination with regard to the Malvinas Islands in 1985 when it had rejected by a large majority two proposals by the United Kingdom seeking to incorporate that principle into a draft resolution on the question.

9. All the General Assembly resolutions on the issue, in particular resolution 2065 (XX), as well as those adopted by the Special Committee, made no reference to self-determination and expressly established that, owing to the existence of a sovereignty dispute over the Islands in question, the way to put an end to that special and particular colonial situation was through a negotiated settlement of the dispute over sovereignty between the two parties involved: the United Kingdom and Argentina. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in resolution 31/49, had called upon Argentina and the United Kingdom to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation during such negotiations. The unilateral and illegal exploration and exploitation by the United Kingdom of the renewable and non-renewable natural resources of Argentina in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were in open violation of that specific United Nations pronouncement.

Agenda item 58: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*)

Draft resolution III on implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and international institutions (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

10. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

11. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador,

* The delegation of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

12. *Draft resolution III was adopted by 101 votes to none, with 51 abstentions.**

13. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because the draft resolution had to be implemented in accordance with the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on specific Territories.

14. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that, while her delegation supported assistance by the specialized agencies to Non-Self-Governing Territories in humanitarian, technical and educational fields, it considered that the agency mandates must be scrupulously observed, and for that reason it had abstained in the vote.

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other items*) (*continued*)

Draft resolution VII on dissemination of information on decolonization (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

15. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

16. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon

* The delegation of Sweden subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to abstain in the vote.

Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France.

17. *Draft resolution VII was adopted by 147 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.*

18. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution because it considered that the obligation placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on the scarce resources of the United Nations.

19. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that Argentina, while fully supporting the right to self-determination of colonized peoples under resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV), had voted in favour of draft resolution VII on the understanding that it would be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, all of which subsequent to resolution 2065 (XX) had defined the issue of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas explicitly as a special and particular colonial situation in that it involved a sovereignty dispute between the two parties, Argentina and the United Kingdom, which had been requested to conduct negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful solution to the problem, bearing in mind the interests of the population of the Islands.

Draft resolution VIII on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

20. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Belgium, France.

22. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 149 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.*

23. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina), said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution but wished to recall that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right of self-determination applied, meaning Territories where there was no dispute over sovereignty. That requirement was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly.

24. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation continued to find some elements of the draft resolution unacceptable, and had therefore voted against it. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories, while fully taking into account the views of the peoples of those Territories.

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/66/20)

Panel discussion on the contribution of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

25. **The Chair**, recalling that the panel discussion had been called for by the member States of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), said that it focused on a topic of major importance in view of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) soon to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012.

26. **Mr. Prunariu** (Romania), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), drew attention to the note by the Secretariat on the contribution of the Committee to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: harnessing space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development (A/AC.105/993). COPUOS had continuously made efforts to promote capacity-building in the use of space science and technology applications in critical areas at the national, regional and international levels.

27. The current panel discussion was the fifth in a series held by the Fourth Committee since 2007 on related topics. The previous discussions had focused on space tools and solutions for climate change; space applications and food security; space for global health — space technology and pandemics; and space and emergencies. All the panel discussions to date had demonstrated the increasing need to address the major challenges concerned in a holistic manner, and had recognized that space-based technology together with terrestrial data provided a set of tools that was of increasing importance to decision makers. The observations made at the previous panel discussions should be taken into account in the current discussion.

28. With regard to future work, space exploration and advances in space science and research were fundamental to the operational use of space technology and its applications. Such applications were of practical benefit in almost every area of human endeavour. It was necessary to look more closely at how they could contribute further to meeting such challenges as climate change, food security and global health, and how the outcomes of scientific research on human space flight could increase benefits, in particular for developing countries. Regional and interregional cooperation was becoming increasingly important for ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space, assisting States in the development of their space capabilities and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Closer coordination was also needed between COPUOS and other intergovernmental bodies involved in the United Nations global development agenda, including with respect to the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development.

29. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), speaking as a representative of the United States Department of State and accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that COPUOS played a vital role in promoting international cooperation with regard to space science and technology and their applications, which were key to promoting sustainable development. Space systems were used globally regardless of a country's level of social and economic development. Over the past 50 years, COPUOS had developed a legal framework under which the benefits of space exploration were made available to all nations. It had also worked to strengthen capacity, particularly in developing countries, in the use and applications of space technology.

30. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty) codified a number of fundamental principles, the most important of which was that the exploration and use of outer space was the province of

all mankind and that States should strive to cooperate internationally to share the benefits of such exploration and use. Subsequently, a series of other instruments had given further effect to individual provisions of the 1967 Treaty, and a series of non-binding principles on specific applications of space technology had also been adopted. The principles most relevant to the topic of sustainability were the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, which had been adopted in 1986 with a view to ensuring that data collected from remote sensing activities carried out by different countries were made available as widely as possible. Remote sensing technology was vital to an understanding of the environment, climate change and sustainability. Another element in the legal framework initiated by COPUOS was the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, adopted in 1996.

31. COPUOS had also contributed to international cooperation through the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, the purpose of which was to promote the use of such systems for sustainable development and their integration into infrastructures, particularly in developing countries. The Committee's members included those States that were current and future providers of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), other interested Member States, and 17 international organizations that used GNSS to fulfil their individual mandates.

32. Lastly, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS had established the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in order to ensure that the space environment was managed in such a way as to preserve it for future generations and to ensure that space systems, which had become crucial to global infrastructure, were protected from both intentional and unintentional interference. The Working Group would develop a set of best practices guidelines for those purposes, which would be non-binding but applicable to both governmental and non-governmental activities.

33. **Mr. Câmara** (National Institute for Space Research of Brazil), accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that global demand for food was one of the most important challenges relating to sustainable development. The two regions of the world with the largest areas of uncultivated land that was both suitable for cultivation and close to markets were sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the proximity of those areas of land to Earth's remaining tropical forests meant that there was a clear potential conflict between the need to protect the environment and the need to produce more food.

34. In Brazil in 2003-2004, deforestation had reached such a high level that it had caused outrage around the world. A system of daily deforestation alerts had been set up, using space technology to provide real-time information about where it was taking place, which had allowed the police to target the relevant areas and make arrests; it had also enabled the media and non-governmental organizations to monitor the situation. Deforestation had subsequently fallen to its lowest level since 1988. As a result, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009, Brazil had been able to pledge that by 2020 it would reduce deforestation by 80 per cent relative to 2005, which represented a cut of 6.1 gigatons in carbon dioxide emissions. Nonetheless, recent surges of deforestation activity showed that continued vigilance was required. Space data were crucial to that effort. They also made it possible to measure other changes in land use, such as changes from food production to biofuel production.

35. Full global transparency and data democracy were needed in order to achieve sustainable development. In particular, medium-resolution Earth-observation data should be recognized as global public goods. Brazil had been the first country in the world to make its Earth-observation data, obtained from the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS), globally available and was making efforts to establish ground stations for CBERS in a number of African countries. China was also involved in efforts to ensure that CBERS would promote data democracy, and the United States and the European Union had made similar pledges with regard to their satellites. He hoped that other countries would follow suit.

36. One of the most important principles set out in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was principle 10: that environmental issues were best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens and that each individual should have appropriate access to information concerning the environment. At the Rio+20 Conference, work should

begin on drafting a new convention on the public availability of environmental information as a means of achieving global sustainable development.

37. **Mr. Ülgen** (Office of Information and Communications Technology), speaking as Co-Chair of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) and Senior Adviser on Spatial Data Infrastructure to the Chief Information Technology Officer, and accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that the Working Group had been established in 2000 as a voluntary network of geospatial information management professionals from 33 specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations. Its founding objectives had been to share data, develop joint policies, put in place best practices and track emerging technologies in the field of geographic information.

38. One of the Working Group's most recent initiatives was the development of the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure (UNSDI). Geospatial data was commonly divided into two types: core data and thematic data relevant to particular areas of interest to UNGIWG. In the past, separate databases and information management practices had been developed for different thematic areas. The idea behind UNSDI was to pool resources and build shared data services. Spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) were being developed at multiple levels, and United Nations agencies were also developing their own thematic SDIs. UNSDI was intended to be a "system of systems" that ensured interoperability among different infrastructures. A recent milestone in the UNSDI initiative had been the decision to establish the Centre of Excellence for UNSDI as part of the United Nations system-wide information and communications technology harmonization initiative.

39. The UNSDI governance structure consisted of a steering committee, a technical advisory group, and a partners' group that included private sector representatives. The system comprised specific projects led by different United Nations entities with the involvement of non-United Nations partners. The first phase of implementation focused on 24 deliverables in three categories: core deliverables, thematic geodata sets and services, and capacity-building efforts. With regard to the first category, core deliverables, the main objectives were to establish minimum technical governance requirements and to provide interoperable geospatial services, namely a spatial data warehouse and a visualization facility. In the second category, thematic geodata sets and services, 12 United Nations entities were involved in 16 different projects relating to areas such as peacekeeping, the environment, humanitarian affairs and health. Those entities were also involved in capacity-building activities, the third category of deliverables. UNSDI was gaining more visibility both within and outside the United Nations: an increasing number of regional and international bodies were interested in collaborating in the initiative.

40. The objective of the spatial data warehouse was to ensure that the geospatial data of United Nations entities were fully accessible and reusable, in line with the principle of open access to data mentioned by previous speakers. With regard to data visualization, the aim was to put in place a shared facility that would enable United Nations entities to take advantage of the different visualization platforms currently available.

41. Work on the UNSDI initiative at agency level was ongoing, and a trust fund had been established to support it. A number of potential donors had already been identified and all Member States were invited to contribute.

42. In July 2011, the Economic and Social Council had established the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), whose inaugural meeting would take place in Seoul in October 2011. GGIM, which was a political initiative aimed at encouraging collaboration between Member States, had so far been separate from the UNGIWG/UNSDI process, which was focused on geospatial information management within the United Nations system. However, it was expected that the two would become increasingly integrated, as both Member States and United Nations entities faced similar challenges.

43. Another deliverable being worked on at the Centre of Excellence was the two-year UNSDI Gazetteer Framework project, for which technological and financial support was being provided by two Australian organizations. The Framework would make it possible to track who was using and developing each gazetteer and for what purpose. It would also enable cross-referencing of gazetteer terms between systems and would allow registered gazetteers to be supplemented with information provided by users. The major stakeholders in the project were the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the

Global Pulse initiative of the Office of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A pilot project would be launched in Indonesia focusing on the thematic areas of social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster management.

44. **Ms. Othman** (Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs), accompanying her statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that the Office had a number of operational priorities. The first was to strengthen the intergovernmental process by servicing COPUOS meetings in Vienna and supporting regional coordination mechanisms and initiatives. The second was to discharge the Secretary-General's responsibilities in the context of United Nations treaties and conventions on space law, the most important of which was maintaining the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space; the Office also carried out a programme of capacity-building in space law and space policy. The third operational priority was to enhance the use of space science and technology and their applications, particularly for sustainable development, including through capacity-building initiatives. In addition, in line with the United Nations development agenda, the Office organized workshops, fellowships and other programmes relating to global health, climate change and humanitarian assistance.

45. The fourth operational priority was to utilize space science and technology to secure global public goods. The Office was facilitating the growth of a global network of space weather instruments and was implementing the United Nations Platform of Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) programme. It also served as the executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, which was aiming to establish a "system of systems". The fifth priority was to enhance cooperation among United Nations entities in space-related activities through a special inter-agency coordination mechanism. The Office also promoted data sharing within the United Nations system, in particular to support the COPUOS position on harnessing the use of geospatial data for sustainable development at the Rio+20 Conference. Lastly, the sixth operational priority was to increase public awareness of the socio-economic benefits of space on an ongoing basis, and particularly during World Space Week each year. The Office had an active public outreach programme and had also produced a publication, *Space Matters*, describing its work.

46. The Office for Outer Space Affairs participated in the sessions of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. At the thirty-first session, held in Geneva in March 2011, a special report on space and climate change (A/AC.105/991) had been adopted and would be used as input for a joint publication of the Office and the World Meteorological Organization on the same topic. Through the Inter-Agency Meeting, the Office would provide input to the Rio+20 process, focusing in particular on the importance of space data for sustainable development and the promotion of data sharing. In the context of climate change, the agencies that took part in the Inter-Agency Meeting were working on the establishment of a global repository of satellite-based data and were also committed to enhancing the use of space technology to address needs identified under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

47. **Ms. Pessôa** (Brazil) said that the theme of the current panel discussion was particularly important to Brazil, as the host of the Rio+20 Conference. Her Government recognized the value of geospatial data, in particular data provided by satellite systems, for the purpose of supporting sustainable development policies. The establishment of national spatial data infrastructures, together with appropriate training and education, could help support development policies in countries that would benefit from wider use of such data. In that regard, she reiterated her Government's support for universal access to geospatial data and welcomed the increased availability of space-derived data at little or no cost from sources such as the CBERS satellite.

48. Her Government wished to continue working in partnership with other developing countries to promote the peaceful uses of space technology in areas of societal benefit. States with expertise in the establishment, operation and maintenance of space-derived geospatial infrastructures and databases or in the use of space-derived geospatial data to support governmental policies should assist countries wishing to develop their own capacity and expertise in those areas.

49. The objective of the Rio+20 Conference was to renew political commitment to sustainable development. Space science and technology and their applications

provided essential tools for finding viable long-term solutions to sustainable development challenges. She also endorsed the call for a renewed commitment to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and for work to begin on a legal framework for the implementation of that principle.

General debate

50. **Mr. Prunariu** (Romania), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and introducing its report on its fifty-fourth session (A/66/20), said that the year 2011 marked the fiftieth anniversaries of the first human space flight and of the establishment of COPUOS, which had proceeded to formulate the first legal principles governing space activities then adopted in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI) A-E. The commemorative segment of the session, held to celebrate the two anniversaries, was summarized in annex I to the report, which also contained the Declaration adopted to mark the occasion. The year 2011 was also the thirtieth anniversary of the first test flight of the United States space shuttle Columbia, whose contribution to international cooperation in space was recognized by all.

51. For half a century the Committee had witnessed and been at the centre of humankind's amazing exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes, and had made efforts to harness the benefits of space science and technology in order to ensure the development of all countries. It had also been instrumental in the development of the international legal regime governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space. The Committee had aligned many of its activities with the Millennium Development Goals, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had been one of its central efforts, leading to the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems and UN-SPIDER.

52. Recent natural disasters served as a reminder of the importance of building capacities to mitigate their effects. Space tools were indispensable in such endeavours, and COPUOS had worked to increase awareness and build capacity both in disaster management and in other critical areas such as climate change, food security and global health. It was also important to look more closely at how advanced space research and technologies could contribute to addressing specific concerns such as clean energy and drinking water, the management of natural resources, tele-education and tele-health applications, and capacity-building, and how research on human space flight, especially through the International Space Station, could be made an even stronger tool for development.

53. In the past year, COPUOS had continued its consideration of the important agenda items discussed in sections II.F to J of the report, several of which related directly or indirectly to the work carried out by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, the only United Nations-wide coordination mechanism for space-related activities. The Committee's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee had continued to work jointly on promoting national implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had also continued to develop the workplan relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space through its Working Group on the question, and the terms of reference and methods of work of its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, set out in annex II to the report, had been adopted by COPUOS. The Legal Subcommittee was making good progress in its review of national space legislation through its Working Group on the question, and it was also identifying ways of building capacity in space law, particularly in developing countries. Working with the Subcommittee, the Office for Outer Space Affairs had recently created a tool on its website for the archiving of official records relating to the *travaux préparatoires* of the treaties and principles on outer space.

54. The major space-related mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and the Americas were providing platforms for enhanced coordination and cooperation between spacefaring nations and emerging space nations, and establishing partnerships between users and providers of space-based services. The regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated to the United Nations were, with the support of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, doing commendable work. Recent events worthy of note were the holding of the International Astronautical Congress in Cape Town and the observance of World Space Week.

55. **Mr. Vidal** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the associated countries Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), said that regional and interregional cooperation was essential in order to expand the peaceful uses of outer space, help States develop space-related capacities and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that connection, he recalled the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/122.

56. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/97, stated its conviction that space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the achievement of a number of important objectives, in particular poverty eradication, and COPUOS recognized that the establishment of national spatial data infrastructures could serve the purpose of supporting development policies in a number of areas. In that context, MERCOSUR reiterated its support for universal access to geospatial data. It also supported the COPUOS recommendation that States with expertise in the establishment, operation and maintenance of space-derived geospatial infrastructures and databases or in the use of space-derived geospatial data to support governmental policies should assist those countries wishing to develop their own capacity and expertise in the use of such data. The increased availability of space-based data at little or no cost, including data provided by the Argentine Earth observation satellite SAC-C and the CBERS satellite, was a welcome development. South-South cooperation could also help build national capacities and promote the use of spatial data for sustainable development.

57. Space science and technology and their applications provided indispensable tools for sustainable development. In that regard, he drew attention to the activities of the regional centres for space science and technology education, in particular the centre for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Brazil campus of that centre was committed to promoting cooperation among MERCOSUR States, particularly in the important area of capacity-building.

58. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), noting that 2011 marked the fiftieth anniversaries of the first human space flight and of the first session of COPUOS, said that the space age had begun as a struggle for security and prestige between the Soviet Union and the United States. Today, Russians and Americans, together with nationals of dozens of other countries, lived and worked together on the International Space Station and cooperated to promote the peaceful uses of outer space. COPUOS had enjoyed great success in bringing the benefits of space exploration to a wide range of people. Terrestrial navigation, disaster response and mitigation, global search and rescue, and weather and climate monitoring all depended on space technology and the sharing of space-derived data. COPUOS had played a vital role in establishing the framework for international cooperation on such matters. It had also carried out critical work in the development of the major space treaties that underpinned space activities and would continue to do so as the use of space evolved and expanded.

59. Since the advent of human space flight 50 years previously, more than 500 people from all six continents had flown in space. 2011 also marked the end of 30 years of United States space shuttle operations. The International Space Station was the most ambitious international engineering project in human experience. With its assembly completed, a new era of utilization for research was beginning, and the Space Station's operations were expected to last until at least 2020. In 2010, the heads of 30 space agencies had gathered in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the space achievements of all nations and underscore their ongoing commitment to cooperation in space exploration.

60. The achievements of the past 50 years should provide the impetus for another 50 years of progress towards a future free of earthbound tyranny and mistrust. COPUOS should continue in its role of stimulating international cooperation to develop the technologies needed to take humans beyond Earth orbit and on to other planets. Such cooperation would ensure that all nations, whether spacefaring or not, found their horizons broadened, their knowledge enhanced and their lives improved.

61. **Ms. Abu** (Israel) said that the Israel Space Agency was contributing to the peaceful use of outer space by promoting innovative scientific projects based on international collaboration. It had signed cooperation agreements with eight countries and would

conclude similar agreements in the near future with four others. Israel was also currently negotiating a framework agreement to join the European Space Agency.

62. Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of its first satellite in September 1988; it had technological advantages in certain niches, notably small sophisticated satellites and satellite-based technologies such as remote sensing. The Israeli space industry continued to expand its links with foreign partners and had sought to advance a number of projects that would benefit the international community at large. Israel and France, for instance, were cooperating on a project using an observation microsatellite which produced highly accurate data that could be used for the monitoring and analysis of land surface and would help optimize agriculture and aquaculture. Israel also had a special partnership with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which it had maintained even after its joint mission on the Columbia shuttle had, after producing valuable data, ended in tragedy. Israel had recently joined the NASA Lunar Science Institute and would carry out joint scientific undertakings, including the establishment of an infrastructure to facilitate virtual collaboration. Israel had also begun to work closely with Italy's space agency, with which it had cooperated successfully in the multispectral field. In 2011, Israel had signed cooperation agreements with the Russian space agency and the European Space Agency.

63. The Israeli private sector was also a significant contributor to the global space industry; its activities included providing rural communication services to remote communities in a number of countries and, in the field of space electro-optics, developing an advanced hyperspectral system. An Israeli company would in 2012 launch its fourth communications satellite, which would provide coverage to most of the Middle East and Eastern and Central Europe. Israel looked forward to expanding its space cooperation and providing access to outer space for countries without the ability to have such access independently.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.